

IN THE CLAIMS

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1. (Thrice Amended) A vascular endothelial cell growth factor (VEGF) antagonist molecule comprising a variant VEGF polypeptide, said variant polypeptide comprising an amino acid modification of at least one cysteine residue, wherein said amino acid modification inhibits the ability of said variant polypeptide to properly dimerize with another VEGF polypeptide monomer, wherein said antagonist molecule is capable of binding to VEGF receptors without significantly inducing a VEGF response, wherein said antagonist molecule is capable of inhibiting a biological activity of a native VEGF protein, wherein said biological activity is induction of a VEGF response.

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are in the present application. The claims are provided in an attached appendix for the Examiner's convenience. As noted above, Applicants request that the amendments submitted September 29, 1999 be entered.

Claim 1 is amended to specify that the biological activity inhibited by the VEGF antagonist molecule is induction of a VEGF response. Support is found at page 9, lines 14-23; page 10, lines 22-29; page 11, lines 18-30; page 21, lines 1-6; and page 55, line 10 to page 56, line 14.

The Advisory Action mailed December 10, 1999 upheld the rejections of Claims 1-14 over previously cited prior art, in particular Pötgens et al. J. Biol. Chem 269: 32879-85 (1994). The Advisory Action states that the broadest reasonable interpretation of the claim phrase "capable of inhibiting a biological activity of a native VEGF protein" encompasses competitive binding of the variants to the VEGF